

# **La Rue Declaration**

## **Ex. I**



Section: New York > Printer-Friendly Version

## Scramble Set for Council

More Than 300 Seen Making Bids in 2009

By GRACE RAUH, Staff Reporter of the Sun | February 26, 2008  
<http://www.nysun.com/new-york/scramble-set-for-council/71826/>

**WITH 36 MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL BEING FORCED OUT OF OFFICE NEXT YEAR DUE TO term limits, the election of 2009 could be the biggest and most expensive to hit New York.**

At least 45 New Yorkers already are amassing campaign war chests to run for council seats and many more are expected to enter races in the coming months. One political consultant who is advising council candidates says he has identified more than 300 candidates he expects to run in 2009.

The early start to council campaigning and fund-raising efforts mirrors the early start to this year's presidential race, with local candidates saying they want to put fund raising behind them so they can focus on campaigning as the city election nears.

"Put on your helmets and put on your seat belts: It's going to be like a demolition derby," a former aide and campaign strategist to Mayor Bloomberg, William Cunningham, said. "People are running around, banging into each other, and then four years from now all of those people pretty much get a free ride for re-election. That's pretty much how it's worked out."

The last time a wave of candidates ran for seats on the council was in 2001, when another large class of members was removed from office by term limits.

More than 18 months before the primary, one council candidate said he has already finished fund raising. David Greenfield, who is running to succeed Council Member Simcha Felder in Brooklyn, has raised more than \$170,000, more than any other council candidate in the city so far, according to the New York City Campaign Finance Board's records.

"It's a way to show people early on that you have a lot of support and a lot of momentum and that you are a competitive candidate," Mr. Greenfield, 29, said. "It allows you to get the fund-raising out of the way and focus on the race."

Mr. Greenfield, the executive vice president of the Sephardic Community Federation in Brooklyn, said he plans to accept public matching funds for his campaign, and therefore would have to abide by a spending cap set by the city's Campaign Finance Board.

Once he receives public funds, he will have enough in his account to spend at the limit of \$161,000

during the primary and \$161,000 during the general election, he said.

Another likely candidate, Elizabeth Crowley, the cousin of Rep. Joseph Crowley, has raised more than \$70,000 to run for a council seat and spent more than \$20,000, according to records from the board. She has not yet declared her candidacy, but said that after losing a race in 2001 to Council Member Dennis Gallagher, who represents Middle Village, Glendale, and Ridgewood in Queens, she launched her latest fund-raising push much earlier.

"Not only did I learn a lesson from '01 — to get involved early — but it helps letting other people who are maybe interested in filling the position that you are really interested and not just talking about it," she said.

The Campaign Finance Board will give candidates who participate in its program \$6 for every \$1 collected, up to \$175. A \$175 donation, for example, will bring in \$1,050 in public funds from the board, but \$1,050 is the maximum amount granted by the board for any contributor.

The board gave council candidates \$14.2 million of the approximately \$42 million in public funding spent during the 2001 election, and about \$6.6 million of the approximately \$24 million spent in 2005.

The fund-raising onslaught more than 18 months before the primary and the number of candidates expected to run for the council in 2009 is in many ways a product of the city's term limit law, which restricts city officials from holding a public office for more than two consecutive terms.

Critics of the term limit law say it means that every eight years a new wave of inexperienced lawmakers arrive at City Hall and spend the first year or two learning the ways of city government.

Council Member Lewis Fidler, who is opposed to term limits, said that even before a new class of council members is sworn in, he is concerned about another set of lawmakers: the council members on their way out of office, many of whom are already running for their next political job.

"The ability of the speaker to maintain some kind of cohesion and discipline in the body is going to dissipate, and that will make the council a weaker counterpoint to a mayor and a charter that is executive-centric already," Mr. Fidler, who represents parts of Brooklyn, said. "If you love Mike Bloomberg, that doesn't bother you, but if you don't like the next mayor, that might be a huge concern."

Some 2009 races are heating up very early in the process. There are at least five Brooklyn Democrats looking to succeed Council Member Bill de Blasio, who is running for president of Brooklyn in 2009, while at least four candidates, one of whom, Paul Vallone, is the younger brother of Council Member Peter Vallone Jr., are running to replace Council Member Tony Avella, who represents parts of Queens and is a candidate for mayor.

Assemblyman Michael Gianaris, a Democrat of Astoria, is speculated to be considering a run for the council with the intention of becoming the next speaker.

A race to replace Council Member Alan Gerson in Lower Manhattan is providing political junkies with an early dose of campaign intrigue, with a fight over Internet domain names under way between a likely candidate who is chairwoman of Community Board 1, Julie Menin, and a retired firefighter and former police officer running for the open seat, Peter Gleason.

Mr. Gleason purchased the domain names juliemenin.com, juliemenin.net, and juliemenin.org and plans to post information about his anticipated opponent on them, prompting Ms. Menin to hire an attorney to help her get control of the sites. The dispute was first reported in the Villager newspaper.

"These kinds of things shouldn't happen," Ms. Menin said in an interview with The New York Sun.

"It's just not an honest way to do things."

Mr. Gleason said Ms. Menin should have known to purchase her own domain names.

"I think the voters are going to have to determine whether or not they want to vote for somebody who doesn't have a certain level of foresight," he said.